

The Debt and Other Questions.

The *Richmond Register* has the following interesting paragraph:

"The *Lynchburg Advance* and the *Richmond Dispatch* are in favor of the Democracy's closing out the State debt, and in future to have nothing to do with it. Upon what terms do you propose to close out, gentlemen? If we can get cost—which we fear will never be done—we say let her go."

Upon such terms as the courts may prescribe. The Democrats of Virginia have fought a good fight upon the issue of paying the public debt. They have been over and over again defeated. Not in one contest only, but repeatedly have they gone down before the cohorts of readjustment. They have done their duty. It is no more incumbent upon them to renew the battle upon that issue than it was upon General Johnston's to continue the late war after the States have surrendered at Appomattox Courthouse.

The case of the circuit judges now pending before the present Legislature will be another contest of the same sort if the Readjusters should have the hardihood to undertake to legislate those judges out of office, and to deprive them of salaries which the Constitution says shall not be increased nor diminished during their term of eight years, the courts will so decide. And if the Legislature has no such power, the courts will declare the fact, and, having declared it, will be sustained not only by the Governor of Virginia, but the United States Government.

The debt question will be safe in the hands of the bondholders. The prices at which tax-receivable coupons and consols are selling furnish abundant evidence that the coupon-killer and the other Readjuster bills are regarded by Virginia's creditors as unconstitutional and as doomed to be pronounced null and void by the United States Supreme Court. The utter indifference of the circuit judges as to the action of the Legislature in regard to the tenure of office shows that they, too, have confidence in the courts. Again: we doubt if the Legislature can find a lawyer worthy of the name who will agree to contest Judge Barnes's right to hold his office for a full term. At any rate, the debt question has already been passed upon by the people; and as to the judgeships, the questions which are likely to arise as a result of the action of the present Legislature are questions not proper to be submitted to the people. They are questions which only the courts can decide. When they are thus decided by the United States Supreme Court, it is to be hoped that the Readjusters will be as ready to acquiesce in the decisions as the law-loving Democrats will surely be.

But can these questions be taken up to the Supreme Court of the United States? There is no reason at all for doubting that the Readjuster bills will have to undergo the ordeal of that court. As to the circuit and other judges, they may be safely entrusted with their own case. We have heard a well-known lawyer not only give his opinion that it can be got before the Supreme Court of the United States, but state how it might be done. At any rate, as the questions involved can be decided only by the courts, it is not for the Democratic party to take those questions before the people. If neither the State courts nor the Federal courts will protect the creditors of Virginia, thirteen millions of the State debt must stand repudiated; and if neither the State courts nor the Federal courts will protect the judiciary of Virginia, the judges must be turned out to graze. But there is not much danger that the United States Supreme Court will be wanting in willingness to perform its duty. "There is no wrong without a remedy" is the motto of that court.

White Burley Tobacco.

The *Apostrophe* publishes the following note to a Petersburg. It contains suggestions about the cultivation and curing of the "White Burley" tobacco, with which so many of the planters intend to experiment this year, that may prove of interest:

"THE FALLS," NOTWATY COUNTY, VA., February 9, 1882.

My Dear Sir,—Yours came duly to hand asking about the cultivation and management of the "White Burley" tobacco which you sold for me at \$25 per hundred in your city. I very gladly give any information I can for the benefit of my brother-planters. I planted it on gray, sandy soil, three feet three inches one way, and three feet four inches the other, just as I did the *Peyote*. I cut it when it began to yellow, and then hung it up in a close house. It cured up, of course, without smoke. I used salt, plaster, and Pacific guano on it. I intend to try it again.

Yours, very truly,

JOHN W. MARSHALL.

We publish elsewhere in our columns to-day, from a gentleman in Danville, a letter which the planters of the South will find worthy of their attention.

The *Whig* says that if there was any contract with the judges elected to fill unexpired terms, the contract was that they should serve only during the remainder of those terms. Suppose we concede that this point is well taken, what will the *Whig* do with the case of the circuit judges? Most of them were elected for full terms, and will not expire until December 31, 1886.

But the fact is the *Whig*, as is its wont, is altogether wrong as to the main question. The contract is secured by the Constitution. The Legislature has no voice in the matter. It might as well undertake to bargain with the Governor that he will serve for only a year, or for two thousand dollars a year, as to undertake to make with the county judges a contract binding them to serve only a part of a term. All such contracts would be no contracts at all. They would be a violation of the Constitution, and therefore null and void.

The Legislature can easily pass on or before the 6th of March all the bills which it is necessary to pass. It is not necessary to pass any apportionment bill. It would be wrong to pass any of a dozen bills which the leading Readjusters desire to have passed. The present session cannot be extended without the votes of some Democrats. In the Senate, it would require twenty-four votes to do it. And as to an extra session, we cannot imagine what good reason Governor CAMERON could give for calling one. He is a young man, and has a future, or hopes so at least. It is not to be assumed that he will act as if this was his last appearance on the public stage.

The State Newspaper.

The following announcement is made in the *State* of yesterday:

"Till to-day we had not thought it necessary to say that the *State* newspaper will continue to be published as heretofore. Many questions, however, have been asked concerning the continuance of this journal, and these questions begot doubts likely to be injurious to it. We, therefore, make the announcement that the *State* newspaper is an established institution, and will stand as a monument to its brilliant and lauded founder.

"RICHARD F. BERNES."

We had occasion a year or more ago to express our high opinion of the abilities of Mr. BERNES. It affords us much gratification to say now that, if we are any Judge, he is a worthy successor of the universally-lamented CHAMBERLAIN, and capable of maintaining the high reputation of the *State*. Late events prove, too, that his heart is as large as his brain. He is an honor to the editorial profession.

Mr. JOHN E. OWENS has joined a stock company in New York, and in commenting upon the fact the *News* says that he is fifty-six years old. Wonder if he does try to pass himself off as only fifty-six? We saw JOHN E. OWENS on the stage in 1842 or '3. If it was the latter year, and he was then only twenty-one, he is now sixty years old.

We return thanks to Rev. A. G. Brown for a pamphlet copy of the "Minutes of the Ninety-ninth Session of the Virginia Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, held at Charlottesville, November 16-21, 1881." The pamphlet contains much more than the title of it indicates.

We acknowledge the receipt of various public documents from several congressmen.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF VIRGINIA.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 1882.

SENATE.

Mr. WOOD, the President *pro tem*, in the chair. No prayer.

Mr. MAYO, from the Committee on Game, reported, with amendments, Senate bill to permit the taking of oysters on Sunday or at night.

INTRODUCED AND REFERRED.

By Mr. SMITH (by request): Petition of Richard Smith and Friends for a law to prohibit the sale, manufacture, and importation of intoxicating liquors.

By Mr. J. RICHARD WINGFIELD: Petition of R. B. Edmonds and others for relief from liability as sureties on sheriff's bond.

By Mr. SEYMOUR: Bill to incorporate Moore-Street Industrial Institution, of the city of Richmond.

By Mr. DUNN: Bill amending act in relation to free bridge at Lynchburg.

By Mr. BELL: Bill in relation to public roads of Amherst and Nelson counties.

By Mr. WATSON: Bill to enable the city of Richmond to extend its water-main through River-view avenue to Broad-street road and the Fair-Grounds, and to improve the Broad-street road thence eastward to the city limits.

ELECTIONS.

S. Brown Allen was elected Auditor of Public Accounts, and George A. Martin Railroad Commissioner, and the Senate adjourned.

HOUSE OF DELEGATES.

The House met at 11 o'clock—Speaker FOWLER in the chair.

The CHAIR laid before the House a communication from the Commissioner of Agriculture (in response to a resolution) recommending certain legislation in the interests of agriculture in this State.

REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES.

House bill No. 370, to amend and reenact the law in relation to the duties, powers, liabilities, and compensation of certain county officers.

House bill No. 371, to amend and reenact section 1 of chapter 124 of the Acts of 1876-7, and to provide for the working of the roads in the counties of Lee and Russell.

INTRODUCED AND REFERRED.

By Mr. DUFF GREEN: A bill providing for submission of the question of repeal of the fence law in Hampshire precinct, Potomac district, King George county, to the voters of said precinct.

By Mr. DUNN: A bill for the relief of John A. Becker, late treasurer of Cumberland county.

By Mr. SEYMOUR: A bill to incorporate the town of Marshall, in the county of Fauquier.

By Mr. CARDWELL: A bill to provide for the working and keeping in order the public roads in the county of Hanover.

By Mr. PALMER: A bill providing for submission of the question of repeal of the fence law in Hampshire precinct, Potomac district, King George county, to the voters of said precinct.

By Mr. KILLAM: A bill for the protection of sheep in the magisterial district of the Island, in the county of Accomac.

LOCAL OPTION.

Petitions favorable to local option were presented as follows:

By Mr. HARKER: From citizens of Band county.

By Mr. BLANK: From citizens of Surry county.

By Mr. KILLAM: From citizens of Accomac county.

UNLAWFUL PASSED.

House bill No. 123, creating a board of harbor commissioners for Norfolk and Portsmouth, and providing for the improvement and preservation of the harbors of Norfolk and Portsmouth. Senate amendments agreed to.

Senate bill No. 42, to amend and reenact section 1 of an act entitled an act to incorporate the City of Norfolk and Norfolk Railroad Company, ratified the 26th day of January, 1876, and an act supplemental thereto, ratified the 24th day of January, 1872, approved on the 23d day of February, 1875.

Senate bill No. 317, to define the true boundary-line between Maryland and Virginia, to designate the headwaters of the Potomac river, and to prohibit unlawful oystering and dredging in the Potomac river and Potomac Sound.

Senate bill No. 36, to incorporate the Lynchburg Street Railway Company, and to make valid the acts of said company under a charter heretofore granted to it by the circuit judge of the city of Lynchburg.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS.

At 1 o'clock the SPEAKER announced that the hour had arrived for the execution of the joint order, which had for its object the election of certain officers.

It having been ascertained that the Senate was ready on its part to proceed, the SPEAKER announced that nominations for the office of Auditor of Public Accounts were in order.

Mr. GEORGE nominated Mr. S. Brown Allen, of Augusta county.

Mr. STUART nominated Mr. Francis L. Brockett, of Alexandria city.

Mr. YOUNG nominated the present incumbent, Mr. John E. Massey, of Albemarle county.

After the customary messages between the two bodies had been sent and received, the Clerk called the roll.

The CHAIR appointed Messrs. HANGER, SAYERS, and HARRIS a committee on the part of the House to count the votes.

The committee, after being out a short time, returned and announced the following:

Whole number of votes cast, 125; necessary to a choice, 63; of which

S. Brown Allen received.....70  
Francis L. Brockett received.....49  
John E. Massey received.....6

The next on the list was the office of Railroad Commissioner.

Mr. WOOD nominated Mr. George A. Martin of Norfolk city.

Mr. GRAVES nominated Judge Legh R. Watts, of Portsmouth.

Roll-call.

The same committee was appointed, and the result ascertained as follows:

Whole number of votes cast, 116; necessary to a choice, 59; of which

George A. Martin received.....71  
Legh R. Watts received.....45

The further consideration of the joint order was postponed until 1 o'clock to-morrow.

Adjourned.

The Tobacco-Tax and Dark Tobacco.

DANVILLE, VA., February 22, 1882.

To the Editor of the *Dispatch*: I have noticed in your issue of the 20th inst. an article designed to show that the present tax on manufactured tobacco is the chief cause of the well-known want of prosperity among the growers of shipping tobacco, and therefore urging an immediate reduction or abolition of this tax. I am heartily in favor of the abolition of the tax, but not for several good reasons, but not because I think its abolition will help the raisers of shipping tobacco. I take the deepest interest in the shipping-tobacco region (I was born and raised there), and would advocate any and all measures tending to the prosperity of the region, but I do not believe that the abolition of the tax will do this. The great burden which crushes out their life and prosperity do them a great wrong, but of course not an intentional one. They resemble the physician who mistakes the disease of the patient and gives medicine for the wrong ailment, and in the removal of the tax on manufactured tobacco help the raisers of shipping tobacco, when almost none of their tobacco enters into domestic consumption? All of it is either exported as leaf or is manufactured for export, and in neither case pays duty on its exportation. Almost all the tobacco in Virginia which supplies the domestic trade work either bright or western tobacco.

It is also worthy of notice that both in Virginia and the West, the shipping-tobacco districts, whose product pays no tax, are not prosperous on account of the low price of their tobacco, while the high rate on an article suitable for the domestic trade is prosperous, as is proved by the tremendous increase in the production of the bright tobacco of Virginia and North Carolina, and of the White Burley of the West.

While the production of shipping tobacco has declined in Virginia and the West, the production of bright tobacco has increased. In a few years increased its sales from 4,000,000 or 5,000,000 pounds to 30,000,000 per annum, and in North Carolina prosperous markets have been established.

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